

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	23 March 2010
Inspector	Maire Atherton
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	1 December 2009
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is located in a residential area with close access to local amenities, shops and public transport facilities. The home can accommodate four young people from the age of 12 to 17 who may have complex behavioural or emotional needs. It is owned by the local council and has recently undergone major refurbishment.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection followed up the one recommendation made in the last report. In addition, key standards were inspected under the outcome staying safe and a selection of standards were inspected from being healthy and organisation.

A well-led and committed staff team work effectively with young people to promote their safety and well-being. This is achieved through the positive working relationships that exist between the staff team, the young people and other professionals. Staff provide young people with information and help them develop strategies they need to keep themselves safe, but the young people at times actively resist this option. Risk assessment is well managed and appropriately used to inform care planning.

Two recommendations are made, one in relation to recording and the other concerning medication.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation made following the last inspection. The record of physical intervention now includes the type of measure used.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The outcome for being healthy was judged as outstanding at the previous inspection; the key standards under this heading have not been fully assessed on this visit.

Staff provide young people with information, support and encouragement that effectively meets and promotes their healthcare needs, through both routine and specialist appointments with professionals. Young people's progress is monitored and the systems in place improve healthcare outcomes for young people, for example, the use of specialist services to discourage smoking, alcohol and drug misuse.

No young people currently self-administer medication, although one young person expressed the wish to do so. There are no written risk assessments in place to show that this has been considered.

Meal times are social occasions, enjoyed by young people and staff as a group. There is a good awareness of healthy eating and the meals provided encourage young people to make healthy choices, alongside less healthy treats.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the young people's right to privacy balanced with their safeguarding needs. For example, the door alarm system is being changed so that door alarms will only be activated on the basis of an individual risk assessment.

Young people are familiar with the complaints system and know how to use it. However, because staff deal with low level grumbles as they arise, formal complaints are infrequent. There has been one written complaint since the last inspection which was managed appropriately.

There are excellent systems in place that proactively seek to safeguard the welfare of the young people, such as ensuring full and timely information sharing with other relevant professionals. The young people acknowledge that staff work with them on keeping safe but that they, as young people do, sometimes choose to ignore the wealth of information and strategies that staff have provided them with. These systems encompass the effective management of child protection, bullying, and unauthorised absence within a risk assessed framework.

Staff and young people enjoy each other's company, socialising at meal times and, for example, relaxing watching television in the evening, and there is considerable warmth in their interactions. The staff have a good awareness of the group dynamics, how the young people relate to each other, and how they influence each other's behaviour. Young people have a good understanding of how they are expected to behave and each has a behavioural management plan, which includes the use of rewards in response to positive behaviour. There is robust monitoring of the records in relation to behaviour management to ensure that the measures used, both sanctions and physical interventions, are appropriate. Unacceptable behaviour is discussed and any sanctions imposed for such behaviour is proportionate and relevant, such as reparation for damage. Young people are encouraged to contribute to the records. The bound record of physical intervention does not record the time of the event, although this is included in supporting documentation.

Health and safety in the home is well managed through a robust approach to risk assessment and a proactive, prompt response to repairing damage. This ensures that young people continue to benefit from comfortable, well-maintained accommodation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The outcome for organisation was judged as outstanding at the previous inspection; the key standards under this heading have not been fully assessed at this inspection. There is an established staff team in post and any shortfalls in staffing are addressed by the use of staff

working additional hours or agency staff. There is a clear commitment to training, with two staff currently undertaking National Vocational Qualification Level 4. Staff are supported in their reflective practice by the use of group supervision in team meetings.

Record keeping is comprehensive and provides detailed information about care practice with, and for, young people and is used in the care planning process.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop a formal risk assessment process to determine whether or not a young person is sufficiently responsible to keep and administer their own medication (NMS 13.9)
- ensure the record of the use of restraint includes all the elements outlined in NMS 22.9. (NMS 22.9)